



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 7 September 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
7 SEPTEMBER 1968

1. Soviet Union -
Czechoslovakia

There is new evidence of Soviet impatience with the pace of Prague's return to orthodoxy. Yesterday Pravda said that despite "serious successes" in the Czech economy, changes in "political and public life" are "only in the initial stages," and that a "correct understanding" of the "normalization" is still lacking. To achieve this "normalization," Prague was advised to drive out the "right-wing antisocialist forces" completely.

To monitor on the spot the changes which Moscow is calling for, the Soviets have sent Vasily Kuznetsov, a deputy foreign minister and central committee member, to Prague as a special envoy. Radio Prague's description of Kuznetsov's initial meeting with President Svoboda suggests that the Russian was not satisfied with Czech efforts so far.

2. United Nations

Pressures to keep the Czech issue alive at the UN are now centering on the General Assembly. A number of members, including Canada, Britain, Brazil, Chile, and Yugoslavia are concerned that the UN not appear paralyzed on the matter.

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3. Communist China

Local authorities all over China are now trying hard to finish off the Red Guards as a "revolutionary" force. In many areas, the people in authority are military men who had been under heavy attack by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. These former targets, now free to strike back for the first time, are doing so with everything they can muster.

First-hand reports from Dairen and Canton say that former Red Guards are being paraded, forced to carry signs labeling them "counterrevolutionary," and sometimes beaten and whipped in public. Reports from both cities suggest that at times a lynching-party atmosphere exists, with "the masses" egged on to carry out executions on their own.

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4. Pakistan

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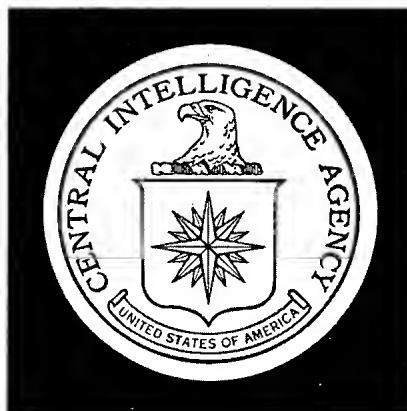
5. Sudan

The patchwork coalition government in Khartoum is more unstable than ever; the army may well be tempted before long to step in.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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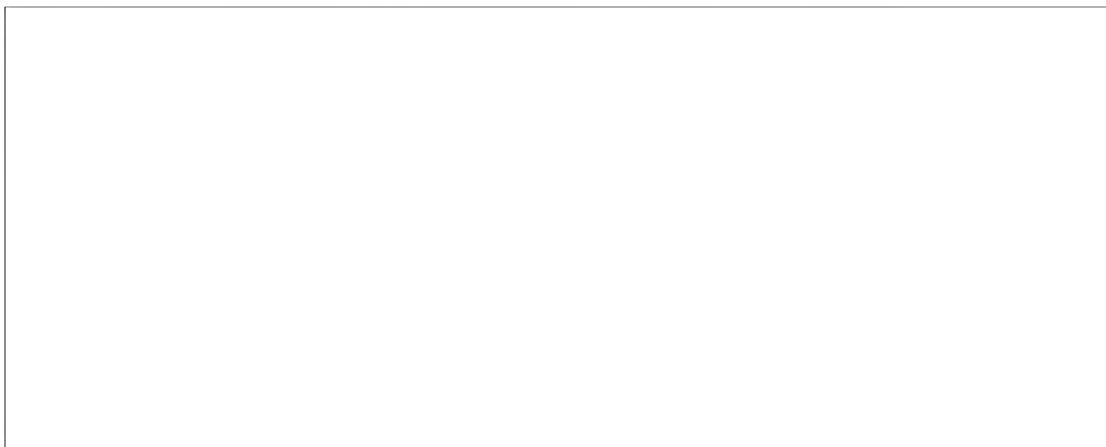
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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

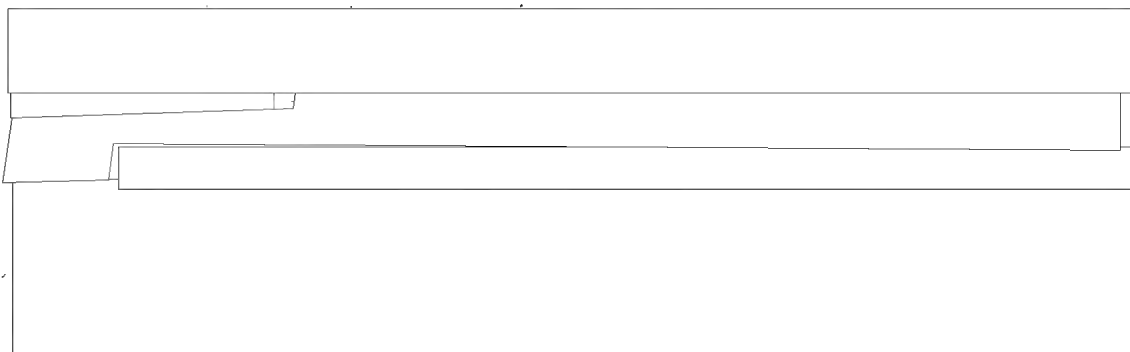
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Conditions in Hanoi Area:

[redacted] there was a rice shortage caused by cold weather this spring. Although some rice reserves were being released, most Vietnamese were forced to eat bread as a substitute. The cold spell apparently had not affected the supply of meat and vegetables, as there were ample supplies of these items in Hanoi markets.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on US Election and Antiwar Sentiment:

Hanoi media are keeping up a drumfire of propaganda concerning the US elections and antiwar sentiment in the United States. The essence of the message is that the recent nominating conventions of the two major parties proved nothing and that any American president will eventually have to bow to those forces opposing the war and find a way out. Chief negotiator Xuan Thuy made an unusually explicit argument along these lines at the formal session of the Paris talks this week.

The latest propaganda piece taking this line is a commentary in the party daily Nhan Dan on 6 September which was broadcast over the international service in English. Most of the editorial flayed the Democratic Party and its platform plank on Vietnam, probably because the Chicago meetings generated such extensive publicity for the antiwar protesters. The message of the editorial, however, was that the "scramble for the presidential chair" was unimportant--it was confined to US "monopoly circles." The only important part of the election process was the opportunity provided "progressive forces" opposing the war in Vietnam to press their position on the candidates.

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Nhan Dan restated Hanoi's position on ending the war by quoting Premier Pham Van Dong's national day speech. This speech is being widely quoted as Hanoi's latest authoritative statement, and Nhan Dan repeated the Premier's peace terms in full--an immediate cessation of the bombing, withdrawal of US troops, and recognition of and negotiation with the Liberation Front on problems of South Vietnam.

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